

2013 PAN ASIAN COMMUNITY SUMMIT



REPORT

SUMMARY

The Pan Asian Community Summit was held on January 28, 2013. The mission of the Summit is to get feedback on the needs and concerns in the Asian American community, so the Commissions can develop solutions and recommendations to the Administration.

The Summit was attended by around 300 individuals from the Asian American community from all over the state. The Summit has received a lot of positive feedback from the community. Some of the people who attended would like to see the Summit as an annual event in Annapolis.

Opening remarks were given by:

- Lily Qi, Vice Chair of the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
- Jesse Singh, Chair of the Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs
- Izzy Patoka, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives
- Senator Karen Montgomery
- Secretary Edward Chow, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
- Courtney Chappell, Senior Advisor to the White House Initiatives on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- KEYNOTE By: Dr. Janelle Wong, Director of the Asian American Studies Program at University of Maryland.

PROGRAM

“Civil Rights, Equality and Handling Cultural Sensitivity”

Moderator:

- Anis Ahmed

Panelist:

- Ms. Loretta Garcia, Esq., Compliance Manager, Montgomery County Office of Human Rights
- Mr. Alvin Gillard, Director, Human Rights Commission, Baltimore City.

Topics Discussed:

- What is the statutory limitation for filing complaint in the State of Maryland?
- What should a citizen do if he or she experiences or witnesses race discrimination?
- What resources does the Maryland Government have against racism for citizens
- What do people use as a justification for racism?

- How do people in the community handle racism or discrimination if it occurs?
- What should a student or parent do if they witness bullying?
- Can a student complain about bullying if the bullying happens outside of school?
- Is there a law in Maryland on hate crime and what constitute hate crimes in Maryland?
- What are some resources that are available for victims?

“Resources for Limited English Proficiency Individuals in Maryland”

Moderator:

- Lily Qi

Panelists:

- Angela Lagdameo, Director of Policy and Planning, Maryland Department of Human Resources
- Jamie Tomaszewski, Contract Manager, Department of Budget and Management’s Division of Policy and Administration

Topics Discussed:

- The panel discussed challenges facing the Asian immigrant communities.
 - Each Asian Community is relatively small, and the linguistic diversity of the communities means Asian LEPs are often an afterthought because most agencies stop at Spanish (due to the universal language and the size of the Latino community).
- The panel clarified expectations for all government agencies and public service providers on language access.
 - It is the responsibilities of the service providers to provide language assistance rather than putting the burden on the individuals and families.
- Language resources:
 - Federal and state laws and various types of language resources for government employees to assist LEP individuals
- The panel devoted some time to talk about the Montgomery County’s good practice model for the State and the capital region.
- Resources for LEP individuals:
 - The panel covered resources to learn English as a secondary language, translation services, and ways for the community to volunteer to help other LEPs.

“Addressing Health and Senior Care in the Asian Community”

Moderator:

- Elizabeth Chung

Panelists:

- Dr. Carlessia Hussein, Director of Minority Health and Health Disparities, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

- Secretary Gloria Lawlah, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging

Topics Discussed:

- Dr. Hussein presented on the health status of the Asian Americans in Maryland.
- The audience wanted more information on the Affordable Care Act and wanted the panelists to elaborate on the Affordable Care Act.
- The audience wanted more information about the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange at the local level.
- There was a concern regarding the under utilization of foreign trained medical providers.
 - The audience would like DHMH would change its policy to improve foreign trained medical providers' scope of practice so they can help communities with language and cultural barriers.
- Secretary Lawlah gave an overwhelming amount of information given but the audience wished that there were more specific data that focused on Asian American communities.
- The audience would like to have increase understanding and access of services to the Asian elderly population.

SURVEY RESULT

Please describe your nationality/ethnicity. (e.g. Chinese, Indian, Korean, etc.)

(15/15 responded)

Stats:

Chinese: 8 (53.3%)

Indian: 2 (13.3%)

Korean: 1 (6.7%)

Nepalese: 1 (6.7%)

Pakistani: 1 (6.7%)

Sri Lankan: 1 (6.7%)

Vietnamese: 1 (6.7%)

Where are you located? Please list your county and state. (e.g. Montgomery, Maryland)

(15/15 responded)

Stats:

Montgomery County: 7 (46.7%)

Baltimore: 3 (20%)

Frederick: 2 (13.3%)

Howard County: 2 (13.3%)

Prince George's: 1 (6.7%)

Do you have issues with language access in your community? How can we better address these issues? What are some of your suggestions?

(14/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 7 (50%)

No: 7 (50%)

- Establish English Coaching Centers. Each community can do this for their own community.
- The library in Baltimore County does not stock Chinese language books for kids to read.
- Improve language access at public service offices (personnel and/or language links).
- Government should help and support, or give authorization to, community social service organizations and non-profits to establish the language services needed in the community. This approach may provide a more cost effective or efficient solution to addressing the community's needs.
- Language access is an issue. The Sri Lankan community in particular does have problems because of its small size in Maryland. This means there is less attention paid to the two main languages in Sri Lanka, Sinhalese and Tamil. If there are programs out there at the state or county level then it's important to improve community awareness. Whether it's accessing government services, understanding their civic obligations and so on, it's important for the government to convey this info. The most common sense way to do this is to provide this info to the Sri Lankan organizations present in Maryland. Although there are only a handful of Sri Lankan organizations, they would reach most of the community.
- We need to continue promoting compliance with Title VI (Civil Rights) laws among federally funded programs.
- People will need access to language services, due to limited English proficiency, in order to complete the documents and demonstrate need to qualify for and receive any public assistance. For example, some languages are available in-house at public service offices, however, have often there isn't capacity, or processes established, to address these needs. Grassroots servicing organizations with language access should get better funding to extend services to those with LEP clients.

Are there civil rights violations or equality issues in your community? Do you have any suggestions on what you would like to see addressed?

(12/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 7 (50%)

No: 7 (50%)

- There have always been perceptions on this topic. It is often hard to identify whether or not it is a civil rights violation, because Asians are often told that we are too sensitive and tend to take things personally. And we are usually quiet and try not to draw any attention while dealing with the majority or the minority-majority.

- Yes; racial and ethnic profiling. Cultural awareness and understanding.
- At the moment, as far as I am aware, there are not reported instances of civil rights violations. That is not to say it's not happening. Sri Lankans tend to be very passive. Perhaps this is a huge generalization; none the less there is a strong element of truth to it. The same could be said of equality issues. This is something we need to look into more actively as a community.
- The violations are probably under reported. Before we determine what to do about it, are we ready to take this on and how? by whom?
- Yes. More awareness in the general public about the culture, community outreach about programs. Especially, concerned about Nepalese Refugees in Baltimore!

Do you perceive any cultural sensitivity issues in your community? What are some suggestions to increase cultural awareness or help with cultural sensitivity?

(11/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 7 (63.6%)

No: 3 (27.3%)

- Yes, definitely. Yet, people who are not sensitive may not care about the awareness training. The key is the Asians ought to be more confident, open, and assertive to let others know about us -- to my experience, this is the best approach to increase the cultural sensitivity. We ought to be sensitive and civil to others as well.
- Yes, a little bit. Some people think diversity just means incorporating African Americans and view ethnic minorities as foreigners.
- We eat Halal Food, no pork or bacon. Muslims normally don't drink. They don't believe in gay marriages but many are being awakened by the views of majority on this issue.
- Improve it with interactivity with multiple ethnicities
- Yes; host a county wide Cultural Festival.
- Yes, need to have more interaction/activity among different communities.
- We need to look into this issue more. Again, note, the community by and large is new to the state with a majority really arriving here in the last 15 years.
- I believe the Commission can play an key role in promoting public awareness. One suggestion I have is to use social media.

- Yes. Indians tend to closely align themselves with their ethnic/religious identities in very visible ways like turbans, saris bindis etc... Education about these symbols helps to insure against prejudice.

Are there instances of bullying in your community? What are some of your thoughts, concerns, or suggestions regarding bullying?

(12/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 5 (41.7%)

No: 2 (16.6%)

Unknown: 5 (41.7%)

- Yes, there is bullying. It comes in other ways, not just picking on someone. It can be excluding someone from events, too.
- There may be but I am not aware of it. Bullying is in the news and it should be handled properly.
- Yes; lack of cultural understanding and awareness; racial profiling
- This needs to be looked into.
- Again, bullying and hate crime exist but may not be reported as such. Education and awareness is important and training for community leaders will also be helpful.
- In the Nepalese refugee community in Baltimore, there is a lot of bullying, even violence resulting in fatalities.

Are there instances of hate crimes in your community? What are some of your thoughts, concerns, or suggestions regarding hate crimes?

(12/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 4 (33.3%)

No: 4 (33.3%)

Unknown: 3 (25%)

- Not aware of.
- Not that I am aware of
- People mention but I not aware of any such incidence. Hate crime is a national and it should be handled appropriately.
- Yes; cultural ignorance and lack of awareness.

- Asian community seems like a real easy target for robbery, like to see more police involved for the safety of community.
- I am not aware of any hate crimes. Had they happened, I am sure that we would have known this by now.
- Not aware of
- Yes, people in my community wear turbans and they sometimes are singled out for threats. Education is the best defense.

Are there issues with health care in your community? What are some of the needs and suggestions?

(14/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 6 (42.9%)

No: 3 (21.4%)

Unknown: 3 (21.4%)

- Not aware of.
- There are some needs for older Indian Americans who do not have access to health care.
- MCC Free medical Clinic takes care of any medical needs.
- Not known
- Yes; increase acceptance of none insured or access to services for those on public assistance.
- A majority could not afford the health insurance, so that basic health services are the necessity
- Needs more research.
- We need to continue our advocacy about cultural competency and health literacy within language perspective. That is not enough, I would like to see an more serious enforcement. We need to take action on those who violate the laws. We also need to work with stakeholders from all agencies. I believe the GOCI can take this on with united forces from all ethnic commissions.
- We deal with lots of small business owners who are struggle each day and does not have health insurance, and not yet eligible for medicare. I understand that there is State offered health insurance for low income families. That needs to be better promoted within AAPI communities for use in AAPI ethnic languages.

- Certain diseases are more prevalent in the Indian community than others, such as diabetes and heart conditions. Education and outreach are helpful.

Are there issues with senior care in your community? What are some concerns or suggestions you may have in regards to senior care?

(13/15 responded)

Stats:

Yes: 7 (53.8%)

No: 5 (38.5%)

Unknown: 1 (7.7%)

- Language barrier is the major issue for seniors seeking health care.
- Most older community members stay at home with their adult children.
- We have a 15 seat bus for our Senior Citizens to take them round to Public Places and sight- seeing and for weekly Prayers. This Bus is bought from our own resources but County helps in its operations. We need one more bus because one is not enough.
- Yes. I haven't checked it yet. But the senior care in Montgomery County I have known is only applicable to senior with Green Card. If Senior, such as our parents to come to visit us in B2 visa, they can't benefit from this care.
- Yes; assistance with public transportation and access to dental care providers.
- The community is mostly young to middle aged. Those that are entering the senior category would be new and in small numbers. We will find out more about this in the future years as their numbers increase.
- Lack of infrastructure about how to work with DOA. Besides working as separate individual commission, it may not be a bad idea to have joint committee on Aging, Health, and Workforce Development.
- Need to increase bi-lingual care services and more information in Asian languages, however, not just having them available, it should be better promoted to AAPI communities possible through grass root service organizations.
- I don't know too much about senior care, except to say that the temples try to provide comprehensive information to seniors.

What issues or suggestions do you have on job creation in the community?

(11/15 responded)

- Asians tend to be well educated and have a very high employment rate. The major issue is to get promoted in according to our dedication and contribution instead of job creation.

- I don't think there is any specific issue related to the Indian community relative to job creation.
- We created Montgomery County Muslim Council and Muslim Montgomery County Muslim Foundation to deal political and poverty issues in the County. By this time we have achieved a lot. County helps the Foundation in their Charitable work. We are enlarging our operation each year. We started with Feeding the homeless and collecting food for the hungry but now it includes distributing raw meat about 3000 lbs each year for the last 7 years, providing Thanksgiving Dinner and Christmas Gift to about 250 families for the last 10 years. It is a star program for our community. We have three employees in the office and it is paid by the County. We do not have jobs problem in our community.
- Multi-levels, multi-cultures plan/methods
- More opportunities for minorities, especially high school students. Summer programs for minorities and students to learn job skills.
- Welcome any support from government help on small business start up and growth.
- By and large Sri Lankans are highly educated. The types of jobs that appeal are in medicines, life sciences, bio-tech, ICT, etc, etc. Perhaps job awareness informational outreach through the few Sri Lankan organizations might be the way to promote greater transparency for those looking for employment in Maryland.
- As an ethnic commission, we have bilingual and bi cultural assets, perhaps we need to help our community to build capacity. I would like to create interpreter training program with work force development, and to introduce these newly trained members to health and human services, and the legal systems.
- Necessary for skilled job trainings to fill the service orientated jobs. Therefore, special funding is recommended for those organizations who offering the job creation programs. Not everyone can be doctors, lawyers and engineers.
- Utilizing language as an asset not an obstacle to be overcome.